

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

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EXDIS DIST AS NODIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EG, IS
SUBJECT: WEIZMAN TRIP TO CAIRO

REF: A) CAIRO 9484, B) CAIRO 9512

1. WEIZMAN WAS AT MY RESIDENCE LAST NIGHT (MARCH 29) AT A RECEPTION FOR CNO ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY AND HE WAS MILDLY EUPHORIC IN MOOD ABOUT HIS TRIP TODAY (THURSDAY) TO EGYPT. HE CONFIRMED THAT HE EXPECTED TO SEE SADAT SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL AND THEN TO CONTINUE MEETINGS WITH GAMASY. GAMASY'S MESSAGE HAD LEFT IT UP TO HIM AS TO WHETHER HE WOULD REMAIN OVERNIGHT OR NOT, AND HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO DO SO. HE PROMISED TO FILL ME IN AS SOON AS HE RETURNED.

2. WHEN I ASKED WEIZMAN WHETHER HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO "OBTAIN SOME NEW AMMUNITION FROM THE CABINET TO TAKE WITH HIM TO EGYPT," HE SAID HESITANTLY, "NOT VERY MUCH, BUT I DO HAVE SOMETHING." HE IS APPARENTLY NOT CERTAIN WHAT HIS MEETINGS WITH GAMASY WILL FOCUS ON, ALTHOUGH HE SEEMS TO BE ASSUMING THEY WILL GO BACK OVER THE MILITARY ISSUES AGAIN SINCE GAMASY HAD MADE CLEAR THAT THIS WOULD BE IN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 04312 301211Z

THE CONTEXT OF THE "MILITARY COMMITTEE." I ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD TRY OUT ANY NEW FORMULATIONS CONCERNING THE SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI, AS FOR EXAMPLE THE PROPOSITION THAT PERHAPS THEY COULD REMAIN AT LEAST FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD UNDER PURELY UN PROTECTION WITH NO IDF FORCES OR "JEWISH DEFENSE UNITS." HE DID NOT ANSWER DIRECTLY, BUT GAVE EVERY INDICATION THAT HE WOULD HAPPILY SETTLE FOR SUCH

AN OUTCOME IF THE EGYPTIANS COULD BUY IT. HOWEVER, FROM BEGIN'S REPORT TO THE CABINET ABOUT HIS WASHINGTON MEETINGS, HE DID NOT SEE THAT THIS FORMULA WAS SOMETHING THE EGYPTIANS WOULD ACCEPT.

3. SIGNIFICANTLY, WEIZMAN IS TAKING ALONG ATTORNEY GENERAL BARAK FOR THE FIRST TIME TO EGYPT. HE SAID "I HOPE THE EGYPTIANS SEE THIS AS A SIGNAL AS TO WHAT I AM PREPARED TO DISCUSS, FOR THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND IT THAT WAY." IN FURTHER DISCUSSION HE SAID THAT HE HAD PROPOSED TO THE CABINET ON SUNDAY THAT DAYAN BE THE ONE TO GO TO CAIRO AT THIS POINT TO TRY TO GET THE NEGOTIATIONS BACK ON THE TRACK, BUT THAT THE CABINET HAD DECIDED HE WAS IN A BETTER POSITION TO DEAL WITH THE EGYPTIANS AT THIS STAGE. HE SAID FURTHER THAT DAYAN HAD ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF BARAK'S GOING WITH WEIZMAN, SO THAT SOME INFORMED DISCUSSION CONCERNING THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND OTHER ISSUES (PRESUMABLY WEST BANK AND GAZA MATTERS) COULD TAKE PLACE. BEGIN APPARENTLY WAS QUITE RESISTANT TO THE IDEA OF BARAK'S ACCOMPANYING WEIZMAN, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT THE "EQUIVALENCY" OF TALKS IN THE TWO COMMITTEES AND THEIR LOCALES. HOWEVER, BEGIN WAS PERSUADED BY DAYAN TO LET BARAK GO ALONG.

4. WEIZMAN LOOKS ON HIS MISSION TODAY AS PERHAPS OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04312 301211Z

GENUINELY CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE FOR ISRAEL'S FUTURE, AND HIS OWN AS WELL. WITHOUT ANYWAY DISPARAGING OUR PEACE-MAKING EFFORTS, HE BELIEVES THAT REAL PROGRESS WILL ONLY BE MADE IN DIRECT BILATERAL CONTACTS, AND HE FEELS THAT HE IS CARRYING AN ENORMOUS WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY AT THIS MOMENT. CHARACTERISTICALLY, HOWEVER, RATHER THAN BEING INTIMIDATED BY IT THIS WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY ONLY SEEMS TO STIMULATE HIS ADRENALIN.

5. WITH REGARD TO MUBARAK'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE PREMATURE "ANNOUNCEMENT" BY BEGIN OF WEIZMAN'S TRIP THE EVEING OF MARCH 29 (REF A), THERE WAS NO REPEAT NO FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT MADE. WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT BEGIN HAD BRIEFED THE KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON HIS WASHINGTON MEETINGS AND ON SUNDAY'S CABINET DECISIONS CONCERNING NEXT STEPS IN THE PEACE PROCESS. THE BRIEFING HAD TAKEN PLACE MONDAY, MARCH 27. BY MARCH 28 ELEMENTS OF THE BRIEFING WERE LEAKING OUT OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE STORY THAT WEIZMAN WOULD PROBABLY BE GOING TO EGYPT SHORTLY AND THAT DAYAN MIGHT SOON GO BACK TO WASHINGTON WAS CARRIED BY THE ISRAELI MEDIA ON THE 28TH. A PROSPECTIVE WEIZMAN TRIP WAS ALSO MENTIONED

IN AN INTERVIEW THAT BEGIN'S CHEF DE CABINET BEN-ELISSAR
GAVE TO FRENCH TELEVISION, BUT AGAIN HE WAS TALKING ABOUT
PROBABILITIES RATHER THAN CERTAINTIES. THE GOI RESOLUTELY
REFUSED TO CONFIRM ON THE RECORD ANY PLANS FOR
WEIZMAN EVEN AS LATE AS MID-AFTERNOON OF WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 29. (WEIZMAN TOLD EMT THAT HE HAD RECEIVED THE
GREEN LIGHT TO COME ONLY AT MIDNIGHT ON TUESDAY, MARCH 28).
I KNOW THAT THIS WHOLE SEQUENCE OF PUBLICITY IS HARD FOR
THE EGYPTIANS TO BELIEVE OR UNDERSTAND, BUT IT IS A FACT OF POLI-
TICAL LIFE IN THIS VERY OPEN SOCIETY. PRACTICALLY NOTHING
IN THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC ARENA CAN BE KET VERY
ONG FROM THE CABINET AND AT LEAST THE KEY COMMITTEE IN
THE KNESSET. AND THOSE BODIES CONTINUE TO BE JUST ABOUT
A LEAKY VESSELS AS THEY WERE IN PREVIOUS ERAS.

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SECRET

PAGE 04 TEL AV 04312 301211Z

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